

*Are Kálidása's Heroes monogamists?—By G. A. GRIERSON, C. S.,  
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I was much interested by an article by Prannáth Paṇḍit in the last number of the Journal of the Asiatic Society on the “morals of Kálidása.”

With reference to one head of his subject, “Polygamy,” I venture to differ from him. He says (page 357), “It is noteworthy that it (polygamy) is never prominently brought forward in the poems, except in the case of the wives of *Daśa-ratha*.” And again, further on, “The greatest of our poet's heroes are either monogamists, or may be taken to be so for all the purposes of his epic narrative.”

Has he not with regard to the poems forgotten *Dilípa*, one of the very noblest characters in the *Raghuvansa*, who is especially declared to have had a numerous (I. 32) *antah-pura-varga* or *zenána*. Moreover, though it is then said that he considered these wives of no value in comparison to *Sudakshiná*, *Dilípa* is at the same time distinctly said to have considered not only her, but also *Lakshmi* as his wife, and hence to have been at least a professed bigamist. Of course it may be urged that calling *Lakshmi* his wife was a mere figure of speech, but still the fact shows that according to *Kálidása*, his model *Dilípa* did not consider polygamy an objectionable practice.

Again *Agni-varṇa* in the nineteenth book, who, though not a reputable character, was undoubtedly one of *Kálidása's* heroes, can hardly be called a monogamist.

With regard to *Kálidása's* play-heroes, one, at least, *viz.*, *Purúravas*, cannot be taken as a monogamist, “for all purposes of the epic narrative,” or of the dramatic narrative either.

In the second Act of *Vikramávaśi*, *Nipunika* makes him out offending his Queen by imagining her to be *Urvaśi*, and calling her by her (*Urvaśi's*) name यन्निमित्तं पुनर्भर्तात्कण्डितस्तस्याः स्त्रिया नाम्ना भर्ता देव्याज्ञप्ता ॥ This surely is hardly the act of a strict monogamist, especially as subsequently *Purúravas* marries *Urvaśi* in the lifetime of his Queen.

The only other Dramatic Hero of *Kálidása* with whom I am acquainted,—*Dushyanta*, though undoubtedly possessed of an “affinity” for *Sakuntalá*, as every right-minded hero should have for the heroine, used to appear surrounded by Yavan women, with bows in their hands and wearing garlands of flowers.\* I know that the commentators say that these women were simply arm-bearers, but on this occasion there was no reason

\* वाणासनहस्ताभिर्यवनीभिर्वनपुष्पमालाधारिणीभिः परिवृतः, near the commencement of the 2nd Act of the *Sakuntalá*.

for their bearing arms, and even if there was, such a profession does not explain their carrying garlands at the same time.

As this passage is, however, liable to discussion. I now quote another in the same act (the second), which occurs just before the 43rd verse (M. W.'s Edition). The *Vidúshaka* says to the king, speaking of his longing for *Sakuntalá*, "Just as a man who is sated with dates may desire the tamarind, so your highness, slighting the jewels of women in your *Zenána*, has fixed his desires upon *Sakuntalá*".\*

There is one more play by a *Kálidása*, which is by some ascribed to the author of the *Sakuntalá*—the *Málavikágnimitra*. The hero in this piece is certainly not a monogamist, in fact *Agnimitra* is represented as being "very much married" indeed. He has a first Queen *Dháriní*, and then a second Queen *Irávatí*, who is the chief villain of the piece. Not only are these both prominent characters, but the king, not satisfied with only two, finishes the play by marrying *Málaviká*, which is the conclusion to which the whole course of events of the piece has been tending.

It thus appears that it can hardly be considered an accurate statement of facts that "the greatest of" *Kálidása's* "heroes are either monogamists or may be taken to be so for all purposes of his epic narrative." *Dilípa* was a polygamist, about *Raghu* we know nothing, and the only great heroes of *Raghu's* line, who bear out the above remarks, so far as we can tell, were *Aja* and *Ráma*.

Every one of the dramatic heroes is a polygamist, and the subject of marriage, so far as it relates to one or to a plurality of wives, is not mentioned either in the *Ritu-Saṅhára*, the *Megha-dúta*, or the *Kumára-Sambhava*.

\* तथांतःपुरस्त्रीरत्नपरिभाविनो भवत इयमभ्यर्थना

